

EFFECT OF STRATEGIC REPOSITIONING ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR: A DYNAMIC CAPABILITY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

How to cite this paper: Dzingirai, M., Mhlanga, D., & Ndhlovu, E. (2026). Effect of strategic repositioning on company performance in the manufacturing sector: A dynamic capability perspective. *Business Performance Review*, 4(2), 19–28.
<https://doi.org/10.22495/bprv4i2p2>

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ISSN Online: 3005-6829
ISSN Print: 3005-6810

Received: 19.05.2025
Revised: 07.09.2025; 24.09.2025; 26.03.2026
Accepted: 02.04.2026

JEL Classification: L1, L2, L6, L7, L8
DOI: 10.22495/bprv4i2p2

With widespread performance declines and organizational failures following the emergence of the 2008 global financial crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, strategic repositioning has increasingly become a trendy concept in strategic management discourse. As such, the primary purpose of this study is to establish the effect of strategic repositioning on market share. Explanatory sequential mixed methods research design reinforces this study, which permitted the usage of both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data collection techniques. The quantitative results establish a positive, statistically significant effect of strategic repositioning on market share. To explain the quantitative results, qualitative follow-up results reveal strategic repositioning as an effective strategy for adapting to constantly changing customer needs and wants, and market expansion, as well as a practical approach to performance recovery. Notably, the struggling or ailing firms can adjust their value propositions to ensure sustainable performance (Konietzko et al., 2023; Tangpong et al., 2025). Consequently, this study suggests that the senior executives of ailing companies should display a high level of commitment toward strategic repositioning in pursuit of corporate rejuvenation. This study is relevant to business researchers, professionals, and policy makers as well as captains of the industry.

Keywords: Strategic Repositioning, Corporate Turnaround, Zombie Firms, Corporate Rescue, Financially Distressed, Corporate Failure

Authors' individual contribution: Conceptualization — M.D. and E.N.; Methodology — M.D.; Resources — M.D. and D.M.; Data Curation — M.D. and D.M.; Writing — Original Draft — M.D. and E.N.; Writing — Review & Editing — D.M. and E.N.; Project Administration — M.D.

Declaration of conflicting interests: The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades, globalization has intensified competition among firms in both developed and developing economies. This development in the business world has led to an upsurge in organizational declines and corporate failures (Janiszewska & Insch, 2012; Mhlanga &

Dzingirai, 2024; Verrier & Strachan, 2024; Wang & Shaver, 2013). As such, both big and small financially distressed organizations are continuously looking for the best turnaround strategies with the purpose of reclaiming their competitive advantage (Dzingirai, 2021; Dzingirai & Baporikar, 2022; Famuwagun, 2017; Pearce & Robbins, 2008; Teixeira et al., 2020). In this regard, struggling firms

are adopting strategic repositioning as a business approach to deal with intense competition and enhance their competitive edge. Repositioning can be applied in an attempt to adapt to the external business environment that is associated with continuous changes in customer needs and wants. In this sense, it appears to be logical for the management of struggling companies to craft and implement repositioning strategies (Wang et al., 2024; Wang & Shi, 2025). Nonetheless, it is discouraging to observe that strategic repositioning as a concept has been largely neglected in the strategic management discourse, especially when dealing with turnaround management (Ryan et al., 2007; Teixeira et al., 2020; Turner, 2003).

Although many turnaround strategies can be adopted in line with the cause of organizational decline, strategic repositioning is a managerial response to a continuous decline in market competitiveness. This situation is mainly experienced by struggling or ailing firms, which means there is a dire need for the firm to adjust the value proposition (Dzingirai, 2025; Konietzko et al., 2023; Tangpong et al., 2025; Turner, 2003). It is salient to observe that strategic repositioning enables the struggling firm to survive, turn around, and adapt to a dynamic environment (Boyne, 2004; Famuwagun, 2017; McGahan & Mitchel, 2003; Pretorius, 2008). This can only be achieved after effectively sensing the environmental impacts, realigning and reconfiguring strategic resources, and adopting effective strategies to address incoming threats. Therefore, strategic repositioning becomes a necessity in rescuing ailing companies.

Going forward, there is no doubt that many Zimbabwean manufacturing firms were producing sterling performance results in the 1980s, especially during 1981 and 1982 (Mlambo, 2017). Unfortunately, the execution of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) in 1990 negatively affected the performance of many firms across the country. In this regard, the manufacturing sector, as one of the strategic pillars of the economy of Zimbabwe, was more vulnerable to this economic blueprint, as attested by a sharp decline in the performance of the textile sub-sector in 1990/91 (Mugumisi, 2015). Notably, at the end of 1999, six large textile firms and 100 clothing companies permanently closed after failing to resuscitate their performance. For instance, companies like Cone Textiles with more than 5000 workers, Fashion Enterprises with more than 1000 workers, Associated Knitting, Biona Textiles, Zimbabwe Textile Industries, and A1 Knitting had permanently shut down owing to operational viability challenges (Mlambo, 2017; Mugumisi, 2015). In addition, there were some signs of corporate performance revitalization in terms of manufacturing firms after the introduction of the multi-currency system were witnessed. Nevertheless, capacity utilization continuously declined to 35% in 2011. This is supported by an increase in the companies placed under judicial management due to poor performance (Mlambo, 2017; Kandwe et al., 2016).

In spite of an upsurge in the number of organizational declines, corporate failures, and judicial management cases, it is quite surprising to observe that the aspect of turnaround strategies has been neglected in strategic management literature. In this sense, the available strategy literature largely

neglected strategic repositioning as a strategic management concept, especially within the context of turnaround management (Ryan et al., 2007; Teixeira et al., 2020; Turner, 2003). On the other hand, empirical evidence concerning strategic repositioning is even sparser, as evidenced by the existence of only two empirical studies, one from Turner (2003) and the other from Ryan et al. (2007). To make matters worse, research on turnaround and organizational decline is largely skewed towards developed countries and given little attention in the context of developing economies like African countries (Kucher & Feldbauer-Durstmuller, 2019; Teixeira et al., 2020). Accordingly, this research addresses this knowledge gap by answering this question: What is the effect of strategic repositioning on market share? The dynamic capability theory was applied in this explanatory sequential mixed methods research. The main findings of this study add value to strategic repositioning and corporate turnaround literature and scholarship.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 analyses the methodology that has been used to conduct empirical research on the effect of strategic repositioning on market share in the manufacturing sector from a dynamic capability perspective. Section 4 presents the quantitative and qualitative results in tandem with the purpose of the current study. Section 5 discusses the findings. Section 6 concluded the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical issues related to strategic repositioning and company performance are discussed in this section. In specific terms, the issues related to dynamic capabilities theory, strategic repositioning, company performance, and empirical evidence on repositioning and turnaround are captured. These aspects are discussed below.

2.1. Conceptualization of strategic repositioning

Various definitions were proposed with respect to strategic repositioning in the strategy literature. Following a thorough review of the literature, it was observed that various authors from different disciplines give different meanings to strategic repositioning. In this sense, Lawton et al. (2011) defined strategic repositioning as a managerial response to the deterioration of market competitiveness of the firm's products or services. In a similar vein, Turner (2003) defined strategic repositioning as a paradigm shift in the company's value proposition in an attempt to adapt to a constantly changing business environment. This definition clearly captures that strategic repositioning is linked to changes in the external business environment, be it in the form of changes in the preferences or needs of the customers. From a marketing perspective, Kotler (2000) described repositioning as designing the firm's image and offerings in a distinctive way so as to occupy a unique place in the mind of the target customers.

On the other hand, Ryan et al. (2007) loosely defined strategic repositioning as a change in the way the company's services or products are perceived by the customer in the marketplace. This

definition from Ryan et al. (2007) is simplistic in nature as compared to the definition by Turner (2003), who captured the important aspect of a paradigm shift in terms of a company's value proposition. This means that strategic repositioning is all about enhancing market competitiveness, which can be cemented by an upsurge in the market share. Hence, the definition by Turner (2003) informs this study as it is in tandem with the aim of turnaround management. However, it must be noted that strategic repositioning as a concept has been largely neglected in the discourse related to strategic management (Ryan et al., 2007; Teixeira et al., 2020; Turner, 2003). Strategic repositioning is mainly used interchangeably with terms like strategic reorientation, strategic fit, rejuvenation, and strategic renewal.

2.2. Dynamic capabilities theory

Dynamic capabilities theory informed this study on the effect of strategic repositioning on market share. In order to cope with a volatile environment, dynamic capabilities are necessary, especially in turnaround situations. It is necessary to note that Teece et al. (1997) developed the dynamic capabilities theory. According to Teece (2007), the dynamic capability perspective is just an extension of the resource-based view. The central message of the dynamic capability perspective is that competitive advantage in a dynamic environment can be achieved through the refreshing and reconfiguration of capabilities and resources of the firm. Admittedly, a company's rehabilitation from acute performance decline depends on the ability of strategic managers to build strategic resources and reconfigure tangible and intangible assets so as to cope with the volatile external environment (Morrow et al., 2007; Sumantri et al., 2023). It is well known that the need for dynamic capabilities is at the epicenter of business success when the organization is operating in a highly dynamic, chaotic, and turbulent environment (Xing et al., 2025; Yang & Gan, 2021).

Despite the relevance of dynamic capability theory in strategic management, especially when it comes to turnaround management during the economic crisis, it is necessary to mention that there are some criticisms of this theory that were put forward by other scholars. In this respect, Babelyte-Labanauskė and Nedzinkas (2017) and Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) criticized the dynamic capability theory in terms of its inability to be applied in a stable or moderately changing and turbulent environment. However, the researchers considered this criticism and then noted that this study was conducted in a more dynamic environment associated with a high degree of uncertainty, fast-tracked by the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, the dynamic capability perspective was more suitable from a strategic management perspective (Wang & Wang, 2017; Chakrabarti, 2015). As a response to this chaotic and dynamic environment, the senior managers of the manufacturing firms were embarking on retrenchment, restructuring, and reorganization with the purpose of turning around the fortunes of the organizations (Yang & Gan, 2021).

2.3. Strategic repositioning and turnaround management

It is widely accepted that strategic repositioning is mainly associated with strategic change in order to regain market competitiveness. With this in mind, it is crystal clear that strategic or brand repositioning is a perfect fit for turnaround management (Hang & Oanh, 2024). In this regard, turnaround is all about change in terms of performance recovery. As such, it means strategic repositioning can allow ailing or financially distressed firms to turn around their performance. More interestingly, strategic repositioning is necessary for an organization to gain market prominence in a dynamic and chaotic environment (Famuwagun, 2017; Prahalad & Hamel, 1994; Zhang et al., 2015). In this sense, struggling or sick companies require agility in the form of strategic repositioning so as to consciously adjust their value proposition (Turner, 2003). Accordingly, an effective turnaround can be achieved by a sick company given that the six elements of strategic repositioning are addressed. These issues are management commitment, core strategic values, customer awareness and sensitivity, strategic flexibility or learning capabilities, external orientation, and belief in the product or brand (Ryan et al., 2007; Turner, 2003).

In light of the above analysis, strategic repositioning is a feasible means to achieve strategic change, which is necessary for a turnaround situation. In this respect, a repositioning strategy adopted by a struggling firm must be transformational and strategic as well as associated with strategic learning and gaining of core capabilities (Famuwagun, 2017). The turnaround management through strategic repositioning can lead to the creation of competencies and capabilities that are in line with the dynamic capabilities theory of strategic management. By adopting a fundamental shift necessitated by strategic repositioning, the troubled firms can alter their underlying value propositions with the aim of achieving market competitiveness (Famuwagun, 2017; Ryan et al., 2007; Turner, 2003; Zhang et al., 2015). Although strategic repositioning appears to be a relevant strategy in turning around the fortunes of ailing firms, it is discouraging to note that it has been underexplored in the context of turnaround management (Ryan et al., 2007; Turner, 2003). Unfortunately, Teixeira et al. (2020) went further to highlight that turnaround literature from the context of developing economies is much sparser than in developed countries.

Despite the complexity associated with corporate rescue, fusing repositioning in the turnaround management advances our understanding. More interestingly, the capability perspective as a theoretical lens to view the interaction of strategic repositioning and company performance in the unique context of turnaround management adds value to the current literature. As such, this study is an attempt to bridge the gap between strategic marketing and strategic management by aiming to establish the effect of strategic repositioning on market share.

2.4. Empirical literature on strategic repositioning and company performance

An examination of the literature revealed inconclusive evidence concerning the nexus between strategic repositioning and company performance. In this respect, some earlier research yielded a positive association (Hambrick & Schecter, 1983; Barker et al., 1998; Dawley et al., 2002), a negative association (O'Neil, 1986), and others produced no effect (Schendel & Patton, 1976; Sudarsanam & Lai, 2001). This means there is a dire need to broaden the empirical evidence with respect to the effect of strategic repositioning on company performance in an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of turnaround management. As such, Teixeira et al. (2020) went further to highlight that turnaround literature from the context of developing economies is much sparser than in developed countries. Heeding this call, this study aims to cover this literature gap by establishing the effect of strategic repositioning on market share in the African context.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This research is reinforced by explanatory sequential mixed methods, which is the research design for establishing the effect of strategic repositioning on market share. This research design is in tandem with the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data so as to effectively understand the turnaround management. To deal with epistemological tension between qualitative and quantitative data, the sequential explanatory (QUANT qual) design was adopted when it comes to data collection and analysis (Bell et al., 2019; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

In terms of justification of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, it was considered that it avoids the violation of the epistemological tension since one type of data set was collected and analyzed at a time. This means quantitative data was collected and analyzed first, and then followed by qualitative data collection and analysis. Interestingly, qualitative data help in the contextualization of quantitative data concerning strategic repositioning and market share. In this study, three themes from the thematic analysis of qualitative data help the researchers to explain the quantitative results that confirmed a positive relationship between strategic repositioning and market share in the manufacturing sector. There is a growing consensus among scholars that the uncontextualized quantitative data cannot give detailed and balanced insights into the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Subedi, 2016). Thus, a follow-up qualitative data enriches and extends the quantitative research outcomes (Leavy, 2017; Subedi, 2016). The observations could have been used in this study, but were excluded owing to bias that can compromise the quality of data integration.

3.2. Population and sample

Given the fact that this study focused on the nexus between strategic repositioning and market share, it was deemed necessary to focus on the top, middle,

and lower-level management. As such, 500 managers from 20 large manufacturing companies were targeted. The organizations were selected on the basis of the implementation of recovery plans. A sample size of 345 managers was applied in this study during the quantitative phase, and a stratified random sampling strategy was adopted. In terms of the qualitative phase, 40 people, including judicial and top managers, were targeted, and then 18 people met the inclusion criteria. Admittedly, the data saturation point was reached at the 16th interviewee. It is of utmost importance to highlight that purposive sampling was used to select the key informants for interviews. In terms of sample size, 16 key informants were the sample subjects for interviews. This is in accordance with the view of Creswell and Creswell (2017), who underscored that small sizes are ideal for qualitative studies. Therefore, the sample for this study was 16 key informants for the qualitative phase.

3.3. Instruments

In terms of data collection strategies, structured questionnaires and interviews were utilized in an attempt to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Notably, Likert scale items were used to measure strategic repositioning as a construct. To ensure the validity of the items, the concepts captured in the strategic repositioning framework proposed by Ryan et al. (2007) informed the development of the items to measure repositioning strategy. The Likert scale captured five points where 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree. The Likert scale captures the statements that the participant must indicate the degree to which he or she agrees with the predetermined statements (Saunders et al., 2016). Notably, the Likert scale items for strategic repositioning are presented in Appendix, Table A.1. More interestingly, the factor loadings and value of Cronbach's alpha of the strategic repositioning Likert scale are presented in Table 1.

In terms of the qualitative phase, interviews were carried out with the key informants, that is, judicial and top managers. Video conferencing in the form of Zoom interviews was conducted at a time when the government imposed stringent COVID-19 regulations. On the other side, face-to-face interviews were also done, whereby an average of 30 minutes was spent per interview session. The designed interview guide was pilot tested before the final interview sessions.

3.4. Data analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data analyses were carried out in line with the mixed methods design. To be specific, Cronbach's alpha analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and regression analysis were conducted in terms of the quantitative stage. For the qualitative stage, thematic analysis was most ideal for analyzing the data set from interviewees. In this respect, the fundamental six stages developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) were observed in analyzing data from key informants. Thematic analysis is widely applied in making sense of qualitative data sets as it is very easy to follow (Braun et al., 2017; Gershgoren et al., 2016).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Reliability and validity statistics

Given that Likert items were used to proxy the strategic repositioning strategy, the research instrument applied in this study was appraised for

internal reliability and construct validity. Notably, internal consistency was appraised with the utilization of Cronbach's alpha, and then construct validity was checked statistically through conducting exploratory factor analysis. Hence, the following Table 1 shows the factor loadings and value of Cronbach's alpha:

Table 1. Validity and reliability test

Variable	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha
Strategic repositioning (REPO)	B1	0.886	0.892
	B2	0.544	
	B3	0.879	
	B4	0.822	
	B5	0.889	
	B6	0.738	
	B7	0.852	
	B8	0.556	
	B9	0.845	

The Cronbach's alpha of 0.892 is reported in Table 1, which shows that the research instrument used in this study was reliable in measuring the construct under study, that is, strategic repositioning. There is a growing consensus among scholars that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.7 and above can statistically validate the internal reliability of the measurement instrument (Hair et al., 2009; Saunders et al., 2016). On the other side, the factor loadings captured in Table 1 range from 0.544 to 0.889. It is interesting to note that all the factor loadings are above 0.5, as indicated in Table 1,

which statistically warrants the construct validity of the research instrument adopted in this study (Turton, 2020; Wiktorowicz, 2017).

4.2. Regression results

After reporting internal reliability and construct validity statistics, the following Table 2 reports the regression results related to the effect of strategic repositioning on market share:

Table 2. Regression results

Model	Coefficients ^a				T	Sig.
	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients			
	B	Std. error	Beta			
1	Constant	1.366	0.333		4.108	0.000
	REPO	0.062	0.031	0.565	1.979	0.040

Note: a. Dependent variable: MktShare.

Table 2 shows that strategic repositioning was the independent variable (REPO), and the dependent variable was market share (MktShare), which is a measure of performance in this study. It is imperative to highlight that strategic repositioning ensures optimal distinctiveness that can lead to market leadership (Hang & Oanh, 2024; Feng et al., 2024; Wang & Shi, 2025). As can be deduced from Table 2, the empirical evidence attests a positive regression coefficient of 0.565 between strategic repositioning and market share, which is statistically significant at a 5% significance level, cemented by a p-value of 0.040. As such, an effective execution of strategic repositioning as a turnaround strategy positively affects the performance of the company as measured by market share. This is strengthened by the fact that strategic repositioning demands changes in terms of the vision, mission, and values as well as product and market development (Bibeault, 2017; Boyne, 2006). Thus, it is an entrepreneurial and practical approach to turnaround management since there is a need to cope with the constantly changing customers' wants and needs. By matching the products and services with the needs and preferences of customers through strategic repositioning, the struggling or ailing company can regain its market share. This result is in support of the earlier studies that established a positive effect of repositioning on

business performance (Stopford & Baden-Fuller, 1990; Mueller & Barker, 1997; Harker & Sharma, 1999). However, O'Neil (1986) observed a negative relationship between repositioning and organizational performance. This disparity can be linked to the fact that the current study was conducted in the context of a developing country, while O'Neil (1986) conducted his study in the United States using a sample of nine companies.

In an attempt to explain the above-mentioned quantitative results, qualitative follow-up data on the quantitative results related to a positive relationship between strategic repositioning and market share were gathered. The majority of participants underscored the essence of strategic repositioning, given that the manufacturing sector is characterized by stiff competition. This was the case because the South African firms were penetrating the manufacturing sector of Zimbabwe. As such, the themes from qualitative data are captured below:

Theme 1: Adapting to customer needs and wants:

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data revealed that strategic repositioning enables the ailing manufacturing firms to gain market share through adapting to the constantly changing needs and wants of the customers. This suggests that repositioning allowed the companies to recover from performance decline. Some of the quotes from the key informants are reported below:

“As we all know that the companies are facing fierce competition from rivals, it is good for the top management of struggling firms to engage in strategic repositioning by realigning their mission, vision, products, and services to capture untapped markets” (SSI14, personal communication, June 17, 2025).

“I can point out that from my extensive experience in turnaround management in Zimbabwe, I normally prioritize this strategy by promoting market and product development. In short, an effective turnaround strategist must be entrepreneurial-oriented so that he or she can identify untapped markets and take the first-mover advantage” (SSI6, personal communication, March 10, 2025).

Based on the above narratives, it is observable that the turnaround strategist who effectively implements strategic repositioning as a turnaround attempt for ailing firms can easily dominate the market. This can be done by taking an entrepreneurial-oriented approach, as indicated by Key informant SSI6. This means that strategic repositioning permits struggling firms to achieve a competitive advantage in the industry by effectively addressing the needs, preferences, and wants of the customers. Consequently, there is room for market share enhancement by adopting strategic repositioning. The earlier studies also established that an entrepreneurial strategy promotes the growth of the ailing company (Boyne, 2006; Ryan et al., 2007; Turner, 2003).

Theme 2: Market expansion (Blue Ocean):

It is worth noting that market expansion emerged as another theme to explain the effectiveness of strategic repositioning in the enhancement of market share during the turnaround process. The majority of the interviewees agreed that repositioning allows the ailing firms to expand their markets by identifying uncontested markets, normally referred to as blue oceans. The following are quotes from participants with respect to market expansion:

“This is a good strategy for creating uncontested markets because it enables the struggling company to augment its revenue by increasing the market share. Also, the company can associate its brand with a specific use so that the consumers perceive the brand as better than that of the rivals in a specific market” (SSI1, personal communication, March 17, 2025).

“Customer tastes are always changing, new products are coming into the system and the competition is becoming intense. So, there is always a need to innovate in terms of strategic repositioning by entering into international markets through strategic alliances” (SSI11, personal communication, March 20, 2025). “Strategic repositioning is an ideal weapon that can be used to regain market share through radical shifts in new markets. I can say in short that the winning strategic repositioning attempt allows the ailing company to enjoy market dominance” (SSI14, personal communication, March 22, 2025).

“Struggling firms must engage in strategic repositioning initiatives so that they can gain market share. The important aspect of strategic repositioning is to embark on blue oceans. These are untapped markets where the company positions its brand without fear of competition. In my view, the strategic

repositioning attempt allows the ailing firm to regain its competitive advantage” (SSI16, personal communication, April 2, 2025).

The above-presented quotes reinforce the essence of market expansion through implementing strategic repositioning during the turnaround process. It can be deduced from the above quotes that strategic repositioning is associated with market expansion by even entering into international markets, as captured by key informant SSI11. More interestingly, the adoption of a repositioning strategy allows the struggling companies to identify blue oceans, which are uncontested markets, as supported by key informant SSI16. The bottom line is that market dominance can be achieved by adopting an effective repositioning strategy. This is in harmony with Bibeault’s (2017) view that struggling forms can come up with entrepreneurial strategies to enter new local and international markets.

Theme 3: Practical approach to performance recovery:

The third theme that emerged from the data was the practical approach to performance recovery. The majority of the participants explicitly highlighted that strategic repositioning was a practical approach to performance recovery when it comes to turning around the performance of the struggling manufacturing firms. With this in mind, some of the quotes extracted from the interview scripts are presented below:

“We should actually spend more time and resources on that strategy. To me, it is a key practical approach to enterprise transformation through mergers and with respect to the ailing company. Customer tastes are always changing, new products are coming into the system and the competition is becoming intense. So, there is always a need to innovate in terms of strategic repositioning by entering into international markets through strategic alliances” (SSI11, personal communication, March 11, 2025).

“I can say in short that the winning strategic repositioning attempt allows the ailing company to enjoy market dominance” (SSI14, personal communication, March 17, 2025). “Struggling firms must engage in strategic repositioning initiatives so that they can gain market share” (SSI16, personal communication, March 6, 2025). “I can point out that from my extensive experience in turnaround management in Zimbabwe, I normally prioritize this strategy by promoting market and product development” (SSI6, personal communication, March 6, 2025).

The narratives captured above cemented that strategic repositioning is regarded as a practical approach to enhancing the market share of an ailing company. Notably, realigning products and services to the preferences, needs, and wants of customers paves the way for promoting product and market development. As such, strategic repositioning becomes a practical turnaround strategy for ailing firms. In pursuit of this strategy, the management of ailing firms engages in mergers and strategic alliances, as mentioned by key informant SSI11. Hence, strategic repositioning is associated with learning and developing core competencies as well as capabilities in pursuit of repositioning the brand in the market.

Nevertheless, a minority of the interviewees critically analyzes the effectiveness of strategic repositioning as a turnaround strategy. They argued that ailing firms might find it cumbersome to focus on this strategy, given that there is an urgent need for huge investment in terms of machinery and expertise. Their views are captured in some of the quotes presented as follows:

“However, it is also costly since there is a need for investment which can become a challenge for a financially distressed firm” (SSI1, personal communication, March 11, 2025). “It is a good strategy. But sometimes repositioning is quite costly. So, you may need new machinery and recapitalization but the sick business does not have that ability” (SSI13, personal communication, March 29, 2025).

Although it is apparent in the above quotes that strategic repositioning is a good strategy, it can be deduced that the interviewees were also worried about the cost component of investment in new machinery and recapitalization. It emerged that sometimes the investor may perceive an ailing company as a successful candidate for failure and then hesitate to invest money in it, which can then hinder the recapitalization process. This emanates from the fact that ailing firms are normally stigmatized (Hambrick, 2018). To ensure transparency on data integration in this study, the three levels of data integration that were employed are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Levels of integration in explanatory sequential mixed methods

Integration level	Explanation
Methodological design	Explanatory sequential design: The quantitative results (a positive relationship between strategic repositioning and market share) informed the qualitative results (themes: adapting to customer needs and wants; market expansion; and a practical approach to performance recovery). However, contrasting qualitative results were observed, whereby respondents highlighted that the strategic repositioning was associated with a high cost of investment.
Methods	Connecting: The quantitative database (numerical data) for this study was linked to the qualitative dataset (textual data) through sampling, whereby the key informants were taken from the quantitative sample frame. Building: The quantitative dataset (numerical data) informed the qualitative data (textual data) collection method, which is the interview guide used in this study. Merging: Both quantitative and qualitative datasets (numerical and textual data) were integrated for comprehensive analysis of the intersectionality between strategic repositioning and market share.
Interpretation and reporting	Contiguous approach: The quantitative and qualitative results were integrated into a single report, whereby the quantitative results concerning the regression analysis of the association between strategic repositioning and market share were presented first, followed by qualitative results. Weaving approach: In this study, the quantitative and qualitative results were discussed together to capture the contracting views. This is captured in the discussion section of this study. Joint displays: Showing the integration levels as shown in Table 3.

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to establish the effect of strategic repositioning on market share. As illustrated in Table 2, the empirical evidence attests to a positive association between strategic repositioning and market share. In the context of this quantitative result, it is important to mention that Islami et al.’s (2024) study also revealed that a strategic brand reposition strategy has a positive effect on market share. In the same vein, Mubarok et al. (2024) concluded that branding positioning strategy augments market competitiveness owing to innovativeness and product differentiation. The qualitative results related to adaptation to customer needs and wants support the view of Riaz (2024), who suggested that corporate brand repositioning strategies are aimed at revitalizing organizational performance, particularly in declining segments of the market. Accordingly, it was observable that the turnaround strategist who effectively implements strategic repositioning as a turnaround attempt for ailing firms can dominate the market. However, strategic repositioning can be costly and harmful to the firm when the expansion effect is outweighed by the erosion effect (Wang et al., 2024).

Moving forward, market expansion is mainly based on strategic repositioning, whereby the company is relentlessly pursuing an uncontested market (Usui & Kotabe, 2025). Nonetheless, market expansion as an element of strategic repositioning is associated with high market research costs that can lead to a high price (Agu et al., 2024). Lastly, it was

observed from the qualitative results that strategic repositioning was a hallmark of performance recovery as it was considered to be a practical approach to regain dominance in the market. However, companies can be confronted with challenges in creating brand positions through adopting an opinion mining approach (Yilmaz & Altunay, 2023).

6. CONCLUSION

The study focuses on the effect of strategic repositioning on market share in the Zimbabwean manufacturing sector. It contributes to the debate on the interaction between repositioning strategy and company performance. Moreover, scant is known about repositioning strategy and turnaround management within the context of developing economies. With this knowledge gap in mind, the explanatory sequential mixed methods research design reinforces this study, which permitted the usage of both structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews as data collection techniques. The quantitative results establish a positive, statistically significant effect of strategic repositioning on market share. To explain the quantitative results, qualitative follow-up results reveal strategic repositioning as an effective strategy for adapting to constantly changing customer needs and wants, and market expansion, as well as a practical approach to performance recovery. In line with both quantitative and qualitative results, the study concludes that strategic repositioning is a powerful tool for turning around the performance

of ailing firms as it enhances market competitiveness. Consequently, this study suggests that the senior executives of ailing companies should display a high level of commitment toward strategic repositioning in pursuit of corporate rejuvenation.

As with any scientific research work, this study provides theoretical and practical implications. For theoretical implications, this study extended the research on dynamic capabilities theory by incorporating it into the turnaround management context with a specific focus on a developing country. Furthermore, the results on the effect of strategic repositioning on market share contribute to the strategic management literature by adding value to the existing mixed results linked to the interaction between repositioning strategy and company performance.

In terms of practical implications, the management and turnaround practitioners can apply strategic repositioning in enhancing the market competitiveness of a struggling as evidenced by the empirical evidence that there is a positive relationship between strategic repositioning and market share. Moreover,

the policymakers can set aside revolving funds for ailing firms so that they can invest in strategic repositioning initiatives, since the study revealed that there were investment costs associated with implementing a repositioning strategy. For financial institutions, they should craft a lending policy that is favorable for financially-troubled firms that are embarking on repositioning strategies.

This study was confined to the private sector, which may hinder the generalization of the results to the public sector. With this in mind, the study suggests that future researchers should cover the public enterprises that can provide comparative empirical evidence on the effect of repositioning strategy on market share. More interestingly, a comparative study between a developed country and a developing country is welcomed in an attempt to broaden our understanding of turnaround management. To this end, self-reported data from interviews and questionnaires were used in this study, which can be associated with recall bias. Therefore, future studies can focus on secondary data related to strategic repositioning.

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APPENDIX. STRATEGIC REPOSITIONING LIKERT SCALE

Please indicate your opinion by ticking a number that corresponds to the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements in relation to the intensity of strategic repositioning in your company (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree).

Table A.1. Strategic repositioning

Item code	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
B1	The company redefined its mission and core activities in response to poor performance in the market.					
B2	The company realigned its strategic values in accordance with the new strategic focus.					
B3	The adopted repositioned strategy is flexible and constantly evolving in order to accommodate changes in the market.					
B4	The organization has a strong set of learning capabilities as a cornerstone of an effective repositioning strategy.					
B5	The company has a high awareness of customer categories.					
B6	The company has a high level of sensitivity with respect to customer needs in order to make bold entrepreneurial moves in the market.					
B7	The company demonstrated a deep and ingrained understanding of external developments in the market.					
B8	The top management team has demonstrated high commitment towards the repositioning strategy.					
B9	The belief in the company's brand is strong and aggressively reflected.					